



THE PARISH OF SAINT PAUL, NEW SOUTHGATE, LONDON

11 Woodland Road, London, N11 1PN

Thinking about a church wedding ? Some frequently asked questions...

1/ What do Christians believe about marriage ?

A/ Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God. In the sacrament of marriage, a couple make a public declaration of lifelong commitment to love each other, *come what may*.

The Bible compares married love with the love Jesus has for his followers. He expressed his love by being prepared to sacrifice himself, even to die for the people he loved. This is amazing, unconditional love. Jesus never said '*I love you, but ...*'!

In marriage we can try to follow Jesus' model by loving each other in a self-sacrificial way and putting our partner's needs before our own.

Marriage also gives you a new legal status as husband and wife. Christians believe that marriage offers the right place for the fulfilment of our sexuality and a stable and secure environment for bringing up children.

2/ Where can I get married ?

A/ Everyone lives in a parish and so belongs to a parish church. In general terms, to get married here at Saint Paul's you must have resided in the parish for a period of six months or more or else be on the Electoral Roll of this parish (but please also see questions 7 & 23 below and their answers).

If one of you lives in a different parish, Banns must also be published there and it is your responsibility to arrange this and obtain an "away Banns certificate" from the parish priest there for our records here. A failure to do this will mean that your marriage cannot take place.

3/ I'm not baptised. I don't go to church. Can I still get married in church ?

A/ Yes – again as long as you live in this parish (but please also see Q.23 below and its answer).

4/ I go to a church of a different denomination. Can I hire your church for my wedding ceremony ?

A/ No. The only weddings which are allowed to take place in this church are according to the Rites of the Church of England. We do not hire the church for any religious ceremonies in any circumstances.

5/ How do I arrange the date and book the church ?

A/ Please send an email to the Vicar at matthew.harbage@london.anglican.org

He will arrange an appointment to meet with you in person to discuss your plans. It will be very helpful if both of you could bring evidence of your identity, nationality and address to that meeting. Do not make any bookings for venues before you speak to a priest.

6/ What if I want to be married in a different church ?

A/ If you are a *regular worshipper* in that church, it is usually possible to be married there. Just speak to the parish priest.

If you are *not* a regular worshipper why not start attending ?

If you have a *special connection* with the church, you can apply for a *Special Licence*. To apply or find out more contact The Faculty Office, 1 The Sanctuary, Westminster, London SW1P 3JT (020 7222 5381).

7/ I heard that you can get married in any church you want to now. Is this true ?

From 1st October 2008, Parliament approved steps to widen the wedding regulations (*"The Church of England Marriage Measure 2008"*). The regulations are now designed to make it easier for couples to get married in a church that has special meaning to them.

Provided the church is available (and also provided they have not been married before, and subject to the matters dealt with at Q.23 below) couples can choose to get married in :

- their local parish (i.e., the parish in which they currently reside)
- the parish where they were baptised and/or confirmed
- a parish they have lived in for 6 months or more, at any time during their lives
- a parish they have regularly attended worship in for at least 6 months
- the parish one of their parents lived in for 6 months or more, in their child's lifetime
- the parish one of their parents regularly attended worship in for at least 6 months during their child's lifetime
- the parish their parents or grandparents were married in.

It is important to note that, other than these specific circumstances, there is no general right for a couple to be married in any church of their choosing.

If you think that you may fall into any of these categories, then you will be asked to complete a separate form and provide documentary evidence in support of your application.

If there is a good reason, you can still apply for a Special Licence. To apply or find out more contact The Faculty Office (details above at paragraph 5).

8/ Can I marry a same sex partner ? Or have a blessing after a Civil Partnership ?

A/ No in either case.

9/ We've decided to get married abroad but we would like a church blessing. Is that possible ?

A/ There is no reason why you shouldn't do this, provided the priest is happy. There is a service of prayer and dedication after a civil ceremony and this can be adapted. There are no legal requirements for this. Please contact us.

10/ I'm divorced. Can I still get married in church ?

The Church of England believes that marriage is *for life*. But it also recognises that, sadly, some marriages do fail. In *exceptional* circumstances, the Church may accept that a divorced person may marry again.

If this is the case, the vicar will discuss your past and your hopes for the future. Even if it is not possible to have a wedding in church, it may be possible to have a service of blessing, prayer and dedication after a civil ceremony.

11/ I'm Church of England and he (or she) is a Roman Catholic. Does that matter ?

A/ People of all denominations who live in the parish have a right to be married in their parish church (provided they have not been married before, and subject to the matters dealt with at Q.23 below). So it doesn't matter from the Church of England's perspective.

However, if one of you is a Roman Catholic and you want the Roman Catholic Church to recognise your marriage, you will need to ask for permission to marry someone who is not a Roman Catholic. There is usually no difficulty about this, as long as the Roman Catholic partner is willing to give the undertaking that he or she will do all he or she can within the unity of the (marriage) partnership to have the children baptised and brought up in the Roman Catholic faith.

12/ Why do we need marriage preparation ?

A/ You have probably invested a lot of time planning your wedding. The day is important but your marriage should last for the rest of your life. However much you think you know each other, you are still two separate individuals with different backgrounds, personalities, experiences, hopes and fears. This parish offers an opportunity to talk through these issues, sometimes as a group with other couples. Attendance is a requirement in all cases.

13/ What are the legal requirements for getting married in Church ?

A/ The normal preliminary to getting married in the Church of England is by the calling (or publication) of Banns. The Banns will be called in public at the 10.30am Sunday Eucharist normally on three successive Sundays. The marriage must take place within three months of the last publication. Hearing your Banns being called provides you with an opportunity to get to know the church and experience our worship.

If you are under the age of eighteen, you must have your parents' consent to marry.

There are special guidelines on church marriage if you have been divorced (please see question 9 and its answer above).

14/ How much will it cost ?

A/ The legal fees for a marriage cover the calling of the Banns, the Marriage Service itself and a certificate of the Marriage. These fees are fixed centrally and are (as of 1st January 2018) £474 (although these fees are reviewed at least once, annually). The Parish has no power to waive any, or all, of these fees. Additionally, there is a “facilities fee” levied locally which is (again, as of 1st January 2017) £182. So the very *basic* cost is **£656**.

Additionally, these fees do not cover any extras you may wish to have for the service, such as an organist, flowers, fees for video recording (see Q.18 below) and so on. Please check with us about these.

15/ Can we be involved in planning the service ?

A/ Of course – and it would be strange if you weren’t! For the service itself, this Parish uses Common Worship : Services and Prayers for the Church of England.

The priest you speak to will be happy to give assistance and ideas about the hymns and appropriate readings you may wish to have.

16/ Should we have one or two rings ?

A/ A wedding ring is a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, and of the commitment you are making to each other. It is entirely up to you whether you have one ring or two.

17/ Can I marry in any other colour than white ?

A/ Yes.

18/ Can we have a video recording of the service ?

A/ You will need to ask permission from the vicar and there will be a fee. Permission is not required to record the authorised words of the service but bear in mind there may be copyright issues if you're recording a person's performance (e.g. a professional organist) or using copyrighted hymns and/or readings.

19/ Do you have rehearsals ?

A/ The priest will want to meet you and the other people taking part in the service before the wedding, in the church, to talk to you all about what to expect. This will normally take place, circumstances permitting, the evening before the wedding. It is not possible to do without the rehearsal.

20/ What about flowers in church ?

A/ Saint Paul’s has a talented team of flower arrangers who will put together appropriate arrangements for you at a reasonable charge (payable in cash in advance). Unfortunately, it is not possible for you to provide your own flowers, or to engage an outside florist. For more details, please contact Kimberly Pope through the vicar.

21/ Can we use Saint Paul's Hall for our reception ?

A/ The Hall and its modern kitchen facilities are available for hire, so this may be possible. To discuss your requirements, please let us know.

22/ May we marry on a Sunday or in Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas) or in Lent (the 6 weeks before Easter) ?

A/ Although (unless you have not been previously married and subject to the matters dealt with in the answers to Q.7 and Q.23) in some circumstances you have the right to get married in a church, the time of the service is decided by the priest. As a matter of course, some priests will **not** marry couples on Sundays, in Advent and in Lent. If you are unsure as to whether your proposed date falls in these periods, please check with the vicar in good time who can advise you and, if necessary, offer alternatives.

23/ What happens if one or both of us is a national of another country outside the E.U. and/or are subject to immigration control by the U.K. Home Office ?

A/ From 2nd March 2015 the wedding of any non-European national in church **must** take place **after** a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate has been issued by the civil Superintendent Registrar. You will need to make an appointment to see the local Superintendent Registrar (at 1 Gentlemans Row, Enfield – 020 8367 5757) to obtain such a Certificate.

Please note that unfortunately it will not be possible to discuss (or plan) your wedding further until you have seen the Registrar and you are in possession of these documents.

24/ What do we need to bring with us to our first formal meeting with the priest ?

A/ Before we can even discuss the possibility of you getting married here, it is vital that you (both) bring documentary evidence of : (a) your **identity**, (b) your **nationality**, and; (c) your **address**.

In all cases, we require sight of your **original** passport or (in the case of some European citizens) your **original** national identity card. Ideally we also require one or more documents that include **your name, supported by a signature or photograph and a current address** (such as a current Driving Licence). If you cannot provide a form of identification that contains all the relevant details, we will accept personal identification **plus** an official document confirming your current address.

For example, we will accept a signed or photographic bankcard plus a separate document giving proof of address, such as a recent utilities bill.

Examples of proof of name and current address :

- Current full U.K. driving licence
- Current signed passport
- National Health Service card
- D.S.S. document
- Local authority rent book
- Bank passbook
- Most recent utilities bill
- Most recent bank or credit card statement